

R. England.

A Commons House of

Seasonable Caution

TO THE
MEMBERS
OF THIS

New PARLIAMENT,

Written and put out against their
SITTING,

October 20th, 1702:

By One that holds Communion with the Church.

Καὶ τίς ὁ κακῶσαν ὑμᾶς ἐὰν τῷ ἀγαθῷ μέμνται γένοιτο ?

L O N D O N ;

Printed for A. Baldwin in Warwick-Lane,
MDCCIII.

Seasonable Caution

MEMBERS
TO THE



NEW
AMENTS

SITTING
Written and put out against their

October 20th, 1702

By the Right Honble Convention with the Church.

And the members of the Church of England

LONDON:

Printed for A. Baldwin in Warwick-Lane.
MDCCLII

The Epistle.

Reader,

THESE few Sheets were written, and are sent out upon no other Design but what is apparent in them, and that is for Prevention of the Evil of disturbing the peaceable Dissenters in their Places, and the Satisfaction both of Those that cannot abide their coming once to Church to enjoy them; and of Themselves in their coming again, and as often as they have good Occasion.

This is endeavoured by the presenting only a true (*tho de industria Cursory*) State of the Nonconformists Case, and their Plea thereby for setting up, and going to Meetings, which hath been hitherto wanting in, or not considered enough by, the Apologies of others.

As also, by offering most plain, obvious and convincing Reasons for taking off the Sacramental Test, which fundamentally does the Business.

The Author of these Sheets is one who writes as he thinks, and practises as he writes. There is Ministerial-Conformity, and Lay-Conformity; and there is a Stated Communion and Occasional Communion. As for Ministerial Conformity, there are, or have been such Objections against it, that he thinks a Man had as good undertake to crack Stones with his Teeth, as to go about to answer them; but as for Lay-Conformity in the ordinary Common Service of the Liturgy, he finds no scruple to hinder his Stated Communion to be with the

Church, *tho his Occasional Communion be with the Meetings, and that sometimes, upon Reason undeniable.*

As for the Nonconformist then, who is no Independent nor Anabaptist, and yet so stingy in his Judgment, that he cannot come to Church at all, he looks on such a one (tho a sincerely converted and godly Man) to be but as yet half instructed, or an almost Protestant; but when he can go to Meetings or to Church indifferently, with Charity on both sides, according as he profits most, and so makes it his Business chiefly to save his Soul (the Churchman being here infinitely behind hand, who hath not yet learned the Rule, Prove all things, and hold fast what is good) then to be, and not till then, a Protestant altogether, and (as to him) St. Paul's desired Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but all that hear me this Day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these Bonds, Acts 26. 29. Unto the Jews I became a Jew, to those that are without the Law, as without Law, and to the weak, as weak: I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all means save some, and this I do for the Gospel's sake, 1 Cor. 9. 20, 21, 22, 23.

The Publisher.

An Insertion which should have come in pag. 27.

Some Members on the sudden, may be for continuance of the Sacramental Test, to keep all but *Churchmen* out of the *House of Commons*; but these are mistaken, because the Sacramental Test is not imposed as a Qualification to *Membership* of Parliament, as it is to an *Office*, tho the *renouncing Transubstantiation* be: Which I put in to prevent Want of Consideration.

*A seasonable Caution to the
Members of this New Par-
liament.*

WHEREAS in one of our late Parliaments, there was a Bill brought into the House of Commons, entitled, *An Act for the better Preservation of the Protestant Religion, and the Prevention of the translating Bishops from one See to another*, which some threaten as if they would, and many fear lest they may, and will if they can (as to the one part) trump up again, when the Parliament sits; the Design whereof (being to exclude all Dissenters from enjoying any Office, Civil or Military, throughout the Kingdom) does appear (in regard to what it would prove) to be not only a manifest wrong to many innocent private Persons (for it would punish them for doing well, as will presently be shewn) but a dangerous attempt in regard to the Government, as like to raise Heart-Burnings and Offence a-

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gainst it, and consequently an Offence also to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, who hath declared, that she will maintain the Act for Toleration for keeping of her Subjects quiet, as, for Reasons of State known best to Herself and Her Council. I cannot but think it proper, and the part of a peaceable Subject, to offer some *Animadversions* on that Bill, with a *Remedy* against it, to the Consideration of those Members that have harboured any Thoughts to revive it; whom I must advise, whosoever they be, not to be too peremptory, but at least to go first and ask the Queen's Opinion before they presume it. It was the Wisdom of our last King to let Men alone in their Religion; and it will be the Glory of his Name, that there was no Persecution, or any Law made to that end, during King William's Reign: And what Man then is there, that is the Queen's Friend, will stand up and move the House, to stain her alike Gracious Government with such an Act?

A Copy of the forenamed Bill is this
as follows.

WHEREAS it is justly apprehended, that
it will much redound to the Honour, Prospe-
rity and Advancement of the Protestant Reformed
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Religion, professed and by Law established in the Church of England, and to the Kingdom in general, if according to the antient Canons of the Church the Removal and Translation of Bishops from one See to another were prevented, and they were fixed during their Lives in the Bishoprick to which they are first promoted, as the Bishops of the Primitive Church were. Therefore may it please Your Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the Day of which shall be in the Year of our Lord no Bishop of, or in the Church of England, or Dominion of Wales, shall or may be removed or translated to any other Bishoprick or See whatsoever, any Law or Usage heretofore to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided always, That nothing in this Act shall extend to the preventing any of the said Bishops or Bishop from being translated to the See or Archbishoprick of Canterbury or York respectively; any thing herein before contained to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

And whereas several Persons not of the Communion of the Church of England, have taken upon them several Offices or Places of Trust in the Civil Government of the Kingdom, for the qualifying themselves

for, or in the same, have (according to the Law now in being) received the Sacrament according to the said Church; but notwithstanding afterwards have deserted the Communion thereof, and frequented and gone to other Publick Places of Worship, according to the Opinions they formerly were of: For preventing the like Practices for the future, be it enacted farther by the Authority aforesaid, that from and after the said

Day of in case any Person, who hath been; or shall be admitted into any Office or Place of Trust in the Civil Government of this Kingdom, or Dominion of Wales; and at any time during the time he shall be in such an Office or Place, shall frequent or go to any other Place of Divine Worship, than some of the Places set apart for the Service of the Church of England; such his Office or Place shall be as to him thenceforth void; and whatsoever he shall do or transact therein shall be utterly null and void; any Law or Statute to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

For Animadversions on this Bill, there are some things I must take leave to say as have been said, as well as more left unsaid. Of the Bill we have two Parts, the one concerns the Bishops, and the other the Dissenters. As for the Bishops, there may be some it is like have a Pique at them for their Moderation, more eminent than in our former Bishops; but, as for that they are out of blame,

blame, so are they out of these Mens reach, and beyond all danger (for this Queen's Life I suppose) of any such Bill; and I have nothing therefore to say as to that part of the same. But as for the *Dissenters*, and the other part of it I am concerned, not for my self who go to Church, but in their behalf; and I must begin, in taking notice of the Title, which I wonder at; for I apprehend not how the Protestant Religion is like to be preserved, or be ever the better for such a Bill, if it should pass. Let a Man be wicked; and so profane as to be no Christian, but a *Deist*, or *Atheist*, this Man may have an Office; but let the honestest Man that is, go to a Meeting, he must be put into a worse Case than such: and how is that conducive to preserve the Protestant Religion, if that be the true Religion of Jesus Christ?

Under the Reign of *Charles* the last, if a Man went to a Meeting, he was to forfeit some Money, but by this Bill he must forfeit his Office. Many Men have nothing but their Office for themselves, Wives and Children to live upon; and if such a one goes to a Meeting, he is utterly undone. This were a beginning Persecution at the height, which I will wave therefore, and leave this Hardship for others to insist upon, and come my self to the matter I mainly

ly intend. It does not enter my Understanding, and I do not see any Reason, why it should be such a Crime in a Man that usually goes to Meetings, to go to Church also and receive the Sacrament upon so good an Occasion, and so necessary, as the being called to an Office. I apprehend nothing in it but a Man's doing his Duty; and to make him forfeit his Place if he goes to a Meeting after, is an unconscionable Prohibition.

I suppose the Gentleman of this Bill is unacquainted with the Principles of such Men as go to Meetings, and knows them not to be so diverse as they are. There are some go to Meetings, because they think our Parochial Churches not to be Gospel-Churches, our Set-forms of Prayer unlawful, and that it is a Sin to kneel at the Sacrament, because the Papists do kneel to the Host. Such Opinionists as these will not, ought not take an Office; if they do, there is none but will allow them to be Hypocrites. Such a Person declares himself to have no Conscience, and if he pretends one, he is worse to me than an Infidel. There are others therefore go to Meetings ordinarily, who yet believe our Churches true Churches, and our Prayers good Prayers, and kneeling at the Sacrament an indifferent Ceremony; and they can therefore,
and

and do sometimes communicate with us. When they go to Meetings, they sit at the Sacrament as a Table-gesture, because their Ministers deliver it *sub genere Concionis*: When they join with us, they kneel at the Sacrament, because our Ministers deliver it *sub genere Orationis*; and they are satisfied against the Objection of symbolizing with the Papist, by the account given of kneeling in the Book (or Rubrick) of the Common-Prayer. Now for such a one as this to come and receive the Sacrament at Church, as the Church does, where is the Fault? If you say he does it upon occasion of an Office, what then? He is the more to be justified.

Before such a Person was called to that Office, the Law required not his coming to Church, and receiving the Sacrament according to the Liturgy, and therefore he went innocently to Meetings, thinking that best for his Souls Health; but now he is called to an Office the Law requires it, and that is the Reason why he does it. The doing what the Law requires is no Fault sure to be punished with the Loss of his Office; nor is the doing that which the Law forbids not in his going to a Meeting afterwards, any more a Fault than it was before, unless by that Bill it were so created. What made the Gentleman to bring in such an unquiet Bill as this is? I would willingly say something to pacify him. I

I will offer him a short Apology. These Ministers are those, or the Successors of those that could not declare or swear to the Doctrine of Non-resistance and Passive-obedience (to name nothing else) as required in the Act of Uniformity (wherein Providence hath appeared for their Vindication to the Blush of the Conformist, at the turn of the Kingdom by the last King) and by that Act they were ejected from the Churches. Being thus deprived, they cannot preach at all, unless in Meetings. They were set apart to that Office, and their Plea is Duty, *greater Duty*. The People many of them are affected with their preaching and praying, more than our Ministers reading their Sermon and Prayers; they chuse it, the Law allows it, they follow them, and their Plea is Edification, *greater Edification*.

There was a Worthy Person we may suppose touched, if not pointed at by this Bill, the then Lord Mayor of London, who is one that went before his Mayoralty sometimes to Church, tho ordinarily to Meetings; but being called to that Office he goes solemnly thither, and receives the Sacrament upon this account, which I have in short laid down, the Law requiring it. The Law here being not against the Law of God, nor his Conscience, it is to be obeyed. I appeal

peal to the Gentleman of the Bill himself to give Judgment.

Where the Word of God is rightly preached, and the Sacraments duly administred, there is a true Church, according to our 39 Articles, as that then Lord Mayor I suppose does know well, whether it be in their private, or our publick Congregations, and he could, and he did go to either according to Occasion. When he goes to Meetings, tho he *Locally* separates from the Parish-Church, he does not *Mentally* separate from it, for he holds it a true Church of Jesus Christ, or otherwise his going from it were Schism; which to shew that he avoids, he goes sometimes thither. On the other side, when he goes to Church, tho he locally separates from the Meeting, he mentally separates not, for he holds that likewise to be a true Church, and that as he is a Member of the Catholick or Universal Church, he hath a Right of Communion occasionally with all true particular Churches, as Parts of the Universal. And what if some other truly conscientious Man that ordinarily goes to Church, and yet upon point of Conscience that *Separation from any true Church of Christ is Schism*, does therefore go sometimes to Meetings, lest his not going at all should be, or seem to be, a refusing it, as if they were no Churches of Christ,

and so a sin against his Lord that will own 'em ? I suppose such a Man might be hooted at by our Gentlemen of the Bill, but by me must be accounted as that Lord Mayor, a moderate Man, a tender Christian, and a singular good Example.

In a late Paper of three Sheets, called an *Essay* to that purpose, I find a choice Invention for the justifying the Nonconformists that go to Church, and communicate there upon this occasion of an Office, but go to Meetings altogether afterwards, and to the Church no more. The Parish-Congregations he counts true Churches, but there is Corruption he says in them. The *Nonconformist* then he allows to come and communicate there, when there is need by reason of his Office, because they are true Churches ; but if he come after, and does it voluntarily when he may chuse, he shall then approve of that Corruption, or seem to approve it, and therefore he is to come no more. This I must needs say is a fine Invention, but too nice and insufficient for the *Nonconformist* to stand upon in point of Conscience in what he does. If there be such Corruption in the Parochial Service, that a Man cannot join in it but he must sin, then he must not come at all : if there be no such, but he may come once, then he may come more than once ; if upon one Occasion, then upon another, and as often as it seems

seems best. In time of Persecution there were many that went to Church always, and never to Meetings, lest they should suffer; but now they go to Meetings and never to Church, being safe. If this Device now were solid, as it is ingenious, and would do, then were all those Men neatly justified; but the old *Nonconformist* that wrote against the *Brownist*, and went to Church ordinarily upon the account that *Separation* was *Schism*; and the good Lord Mayor mentioned, if he can go to Church still as lawful, as well as to Meetings, must be condemned. The true Plea therefore, and substantial to be stood upon, is already named. There were near 2000 Ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity from the Parish-Churches, who did hold those Churches while they were Preachers there to be true Churches, and consequently it is their Duty to maintain 'em to be such: but it is a greater Duty for them to preach the Gospel, and on that account they set up Meetings. When two Duties come together, and cannot both be performed, the greater must take place of the less. The Parish-Churches are of *Man's* Institution, the preaching the Gospel, and the congregating People to that end, is of *God's*; and which Authority of these is the greater, there can be no question. Now which of these Duties I inculcate, either that of uphold-

ing Communion with the Parish Church, or that of performing the Command of God to preach the Gospel, is the greater Duty supposing a Person set apart, and in all respects adapted for it) let the Adversaries themselves judg, as in the sight of God, and speak their Conscience. It is this therefore is the *Ministers Plea*, as is abovesaid; *greater Duty*; and as for the *Hearers*, their Plea as abovesaid also, is *greater Edification*.

But there is here a Book to be taken notice of, a small Book printed in the Year 1683. wherein this very Question is proposed, *Whether it is lawful for any Man to forsake the Communion of the Church of England, and go to separate Meetings, because he can better edify there?* And he maintains it in the Negative upon this Reason: *There is not better Edification to be had in the separate Meetings than in the Communion of the Church of England.* This is the Argument of the Author of those few Sheets, who thereupon takes occasion to extol the Church of England as the best in the World. But to answer this Champion for the Church, it is *brave* indeed what he says, as said by a *Conformist*, but not *co-gent*, any more than for a *Dissenter* to say likewise (which is as true to him) there is not better Edification to be had in the Church of England than in the Communion of a separate Meeting. It may be said by a third Person to either, tho this
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be true *ad hominem*, that there is not better Edification to be had at a Meeting than at Church, or at Church than at a Meeting. yet there is as good, there is the same. There is the same Means, the same Ordinances, the same Spirit; but this cannot be denied that there is diversity of Operation, according as Persons stand affected, and as it pleases God to work. And seeing one Man is wrought upon at a Meeting, and another at the Church; one Man by one Minister, and another by another, there is no plain Christian Man but will chuse, and ought to chuse when he may chuse, to go there where he profits most, even where he finds that he does.

There is another Book of the like size come out about three Years past, as I remember, that charges the *Dissenter* otherways. The Author thereof writes honestly, for taking off the Sacramental Test, but with an uncharitable Reflection on the *Nonconformist*; who telling us, that receiving the Sacrament to another end than that for which it was instituted is a Profanation of it, the *Nonconformists* taking it upon occasion of an Office, says he, is doing so, and thereupon he passes his Censure on all of them for Hypocrites. To this more acute and more bitter Man I answer, That it is true as to such as receive the Sacrament, only to qualify them for an Office, without

out regard to the Nature and End of the Institution ; no doubt but receiving it so, when they would not else receive it all, and to that end solely, which is another quite from that of Christ's Appointment, is a grievous profaning the Holy Ordinance of the Lord's Supper : but this is a *Sophism* to the true Christian Man, who takes it with Devotion, and as he ought, when yet the Law requires it of him. Some Distinction here is obvious, to wit, between the End of the *Ordinance it self*, and the End (the Occasion, or Reason) of receiving *Hic & nunc* ; there is *finis Operis*, and *finis Operantis* ; and *finis operantis ratione operis*, and *ratione Circumstantiarum operis*. The Nonconformist receives the Sacrament *hic & nunc*, that is, at the Church according to the Liturgy (I have said) because the Law requires it in regard to his Office ; but that does not hinder the Ordinance it self being taken with Devotion, and to that end Christ hath instituted it. There are both Ends conscionably observed and answered. I will give an Instance otherwise. A Man comes to Church, to the Prayers and Sermon, on the occasion of a Burial ; he had not come, but because invited to the Funeral : but the coming to that end of burying his Friend, does not hinder his Devotion at Prayers or the Sermon, or make the Prayer or Sermon to be received to another end than

than that Christ hath appointed those Ordinances to be taken. When the Law requires the taking the Sacrament, it requires the taking that Ordinance which Christ hath instituted, and no otherwise but according to his Institution, and that is, the Law requires it to be taken as God requires it; and the Nonconformist does so, whether he takes it at Church, or at a Meeting. He goes to the Meeting, and *does this in remembrance of Christ*, which is the end of the Ordinance as God requires it: He goes to Church, and does it *in remembrance of him* there likewise, as God still requires it, when yet he does it also as the Law requires it, according to the Liturgy, to qualify him for an Office. As the pious Conformist receives the Sacrament when called to an Office, to the end that Christ hath instituted it, tho also to qualify him for his Office; so also the Nonconformist. Now when this is so, and as it ought, what is there at last in the Objection, but a precipitate Judgment, and a profound Paralogism? A universal Negative in Logick converts. If no Man can with a good Conscience take the Sacrament to the end of qualifying himself for an Office, then no Man that takes the Sacrament to that end can have a good Conscience, and what then must be thought of the *Conformist*? Is there any of them so conscientious as to

to leave an Office that they may not profane God's Ordinance, by taking the Sacrament to qualify them for it? This Author therefore is here out, and God forbid but he should; the Argument nevertheless which he uses against the Test, or for repealing the Law, which requires the receiving the Sacrament for a Qualification to every Civil or Military Office, is undoubtedly (as to such Men as come and take it, only to qualify 'em for that Office, and being otherwise unworthy, eat and drink their Damnation) an Argument (laying it right, as it shall be in the end) irrefragable; and shews the Man (if a Church-man) a Man of Honesty, as well as Parts, tho censoriously uncharitable.

There is besides these Books, an *Enquiry into Occasional Conformity*, printed 1697. which falls severely upon another Lord Mayor at that time, for going to Church in the Morning, and to a Meeting in the Afternoon, but yet with civil Language, and this peculiar Moderation, that the Author will condemn neither the going to Church, or going to a Meeting, but the doing both; and the whole arguing of his Book lies in this, that if the Dissenter did well before in going to a Meeting, that does condemn his occasional conforming; if he does well now in conforming, that does condemn his going to any Meeting before.

fore. *It is either a sinful Act* (says he) *in the Dissenter, or else his dissenting before was a sinful Act*; but this is already prevented. Whether this Lord Mayor in his going to Church, or going to a Meeting, did sin against God or no, it is God alone must judg; but as this Author does suppose he did well in the one, I do suppose he did well in both, and sinned in neither, but served God. A Man put into Office does well now in conforming (I have said) because the Law requires it, and he did well before, because then he might chuse. Betwixt an indefinite Affirmative, and an indefinite Negative, there is in Logick no necessary Contradiction. One and the same individual Man for Person, is not one and the same Object all his Lifetime of God's Mercy or Judgment. One and the same Man is under divers Circumstances, and may act diversly upon occasion. It is verily an indifferent thing with me (I wish it were so to others) for a Man to go to a Meeting or to Church, and no more (the Law allowing it) than the going to his Parish-Church, or Chappel belonging to it. It is pity any should mistake this for a double Religion. No, we have but one Religion, one Faith, among the sober Conformist, and Non-conformist. The same Gospel is preach'd, the same Worship is celebrated in both Congregations, and the difference is only in such Mode of

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Worship,

Worship, which may, and is to be used, according to the Place where we perform it. So *Augustine*, *Quod neq; contra fidem, neq; contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter est habendum, & pro eorum inter quos vivitur societate, servandum est.* Aug. ad *Januarium*, Ep. 118.

It is a Presumption of the *Enquirer*, that the only ground of separate Meetings is Purity of Worship; and this is the *πρώτον ψεύδος*, the fundamental Error of his Book. The old Nonconformist thought the Church-Service might be made more pure, and yet went to Church, as Christ did to the Service of the Temple, and to the Synagogues of the corrupt *Jews*. Not but sometimes they met to exercise their Talents, when they could with Prudence and Safety; that is, they went both to Church, and kept private Meetings, having a good Conscience both in the sight of God, and sight of Men. It is a Rule to be remembered here again in Logick, *Ad veritatem indefinitæ propositionis sufficit veritas unius particularis.* If *Socrates* be learned, it proves that Men may be learned: If these Holy Men did well in going to Church and also to Meetings, then must this indefinite Proposition, that it is lawful for Nonconformists to go to Church and Meetings both, be assuredly, as charitably maintained. What their Predecessors then did, the sober Nonconformists do now,

now, but with the Advantage of *Toleration*. It is not therefore in opposition (as this Author supposes) but in conjunction with the Parish-Ministers, that such carry on the common Salvation, as the Parochial Ministers themselves do one with another. There is a Separation that is necessary and lawful, and a sinful Separation which is Schism. When there are many People in a Place (as in a Town or City) that they cannot come together in one Congregation, it is necessary they separate into divers; and that Separation being necessary, it is lawful out of doubt. Let these Congregations be the *Meetings* or the *Parishes*, they are all Churches, so many Churches of Christ, and indeed parts of the *National Church*, whereof the present *Queen* is Head (for they are alike subject to Her Majesty's Government, they have a like Allowance and Protection of Her Laws) as well as parts of the *Catholick Church*, whereof *Christ* is Head. If any take pet or cavil at this, they may; but so it is for all that, as the Case is with us in *England*. Now as it is a Reason or Cause, and a sufficient Cause or Reason, for one part of a Town to separate from the other in the common Service, because they cannot come all to the same Church; so it is a Reason or Cause sufficient for the Nonconformist to separate from the Parish-Communion, because he cannot come

to it : He is ~~not~~ suffered, and he cannot. A necessity is laid upon him (he counts) to exercise his Ministerial Function (supposing a prudential Ability that he can) and a Necessity also to set up Meetings, because otherwise he cannot exercise it. In short then, it is not all Separation, but a causeless Separation only that is Schism. And so that Author is answered, who tells us that *how a Separation and a Conformity is consistent, is to him an inexplicable Riddle* : But he understands not that such Positions are *Indefinitely* affirmed.

There is a Book of another strain, written later by a *Dissenter*, one of as eminent Prudence and Candour, as Worth, that pleased me well, to see it so much of my Mind ; and there is an Opposer : but as I have borrowed nothing I know from the one, I remember nothing particularly to answer in the other, and I interpose not between them. To proceed therefore after this stop in speaking to those Books (or Papers) We are to take it (before I end) to consideration, that the being a *Member* of one of these Meetings does not exempt any Man from being still of the Parish. He is a *Parishioner* still, and he owns it. He pays his *Tithes*, he sows to the Minister of the Parish his *carnal* things, and it is fit he should sometimes come and reap his *spiritual* things, that is, come to Church sometimes, and not go to his Meeting only. But
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you will say at last (which is the most specious and common Objection) that if a Man may upon such an Occasion come to Church, and receive the Sacrament according to usage, then he may do so always, and why does he not do so always? I answer to this, it is true that he *may*, and may always, but it does not follow that he *must*, and must always. If it be lawful now, it is lawful hereafter: but it follows not because a thing is lawful to be done, that a Man must always do it. It is lawful for me to go to a Meeting, and for him to go to Church, but we are not bound either of us to go always thither. He must do it now, because the Law requires it, but he may go to a Meeting after, because the Law requires it not, and he is in the case no longer that he *must*. And what is there to be replied? Does there need any more to be said? if there do, the Apostle shall say it, *All things are lawful for me* (says he) *but all things are not expedient*. It was lawful for my Lord Mayor that then was, to go to Meetings, or to go to Church, it is lawful to go always to both; but it was not expedient for him to go always to either, but expedient for him to go sometimes to one, and sometimes to the other. It was at that time expedient in regard to his Office to go to Church, and it is expedient at this time happily to go to his Meeting as most conducive to his Soul's Health and his
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own Inclination. And what shall I say after all to the Gentleman that brought this Bill into the House? In the Name of God let him take his *Psalter*, and let my Lord Mayor (and the Queen's Officers of all sorts, great and small, that are *Protestants*) say their Prayers *as they will*.

Thus much for *Animadversion* on the Bill; and now for a *Remedy* against any such Design for the future, I propose another, that lays the *Axe* to the *Root*, in the stead of it.

A Bill for removing Scandal from the Church, and for promoting the Service of the Queen, and State.

W Hereas there is a Statute made in the Thirteenth Year of Charles the Second, entituled, An Act for the well-governing and regulating Corporations; and another in the 25th of the same King, entituled, An Act for preventing Dangers that may arise from Popish Recusants; which require that every Man who enjoys any Office, Civil or Military, by Sea or Land, shall take the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the Church of England, whereby her Majesty is depriv'd of the Service of many of her useful Subjects who scruple the same, and many notoriously unworthy and scandalous Persons do come and challenge the Sacrament at the hands of the Minister, which is against the Discipline of the Church, and

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to another end than that for which it was instituted, and so an open Profanation of it by such: Be it enacted,— That all Clauses of the said Acts be so construed, that no Man who declares himself a Protestant, in the renouncing Transubstantiation according to the last mentioned Statute, shall be farther obliged to any Sacramental Test in regard to any Temporal Office; the aforesaid Statutes, or any other, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.

Reasons for the Motion.

1. Such an Act will take off Dishonour from the Church, that has had the most holy Ordinance of her Religion, hitherto prostituted for secular Ends.
2. It will keep many profane Persons from the Danger of eating and drinking their own Damnation.
3. It will be serviceable to her Majesty, who hath need of the help of all her Subjects against the exorbitant Power of France.
4. It will vindicate the Churchman from the Accusation of all such Toryism as designs Persecution; for which End especially it is, that one of them should chuse to make the Motion, and shew they are willing rather to widen than to infringe a legally established Toleration.
5. It will bring much Honour and Love to him

him that makes it, and procure him the Suffrage of many of his County or Borough (if he desires it) for his Election hereafter, as a Man of Temper, Candour and Moderation; and much more if he does it for Conscience-sake, and seeks not Honour (nor fears others Rage) by it.

6. If the matter be prudently concerted, and the Motion made but on an indifferent Advantage, it is like to carry the House along with it; for there is no Cause indeed of Dividing, or Strife of one side against another about it.

7. To make the receiving the Sacrament according to the *Liturgy*, to be a Qualification to every Office, even to the keeping an Alehouse (as hath been enforced by some Justices) is a thing so shameful in the naming, as no modest Man methinks deliberately should once open his Mouth to defend it.

8. To receive the Sacrament to another End (and that only) than Christ hath appointed it, is manifestly sinful: And why must it be done in the best manner according to the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*? If it were done no better than at a Conventicle, it were too well to be so abused.

9. It was a malignant thing in *Charles* the 2^d's time, under the pretence of Danger from Popery, to debar honest Protestants (because Dissenters) from Civil Offices; and it is but an idle thing
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now to think that the continuing such Contrivances should preserve the Church, or the parting therewith hurt it, the Ministry being not concerned therein.

10. Such a Motion may be a Shooing-horn to a Bill for uniting the Protestants (That is, to unite such as may unite, or upon such terms as may be effected, to disabuse those that say such a thing is unpracticable) which if the same Mover should in due time bring in also, he shall be doubly happy, and that both in the favour of some Bishops at present, and the Blessing of the Age to come. You may say, such a Bill would bring in but a very few; and I say it is no matter. There are too many Conforming Ministers already that want Places, and an Act against Pluralities to supply such: But a uniting Act were a *Standing* thing for bringing in all for hereafter, so that our young Scholars that are rare, and of more bright Parts, would then apply themselves to the Church, when now, being conscientious, as well as Men of Knowledge, and not able to swallow the many things at present required to Conformity, are forced to sit down on this side Preferment, in any poor separate Congregation that will but receive 'em. I cannot say how the Major part of the *Nonconformist* Ministers about *London* (whose Reverend Assemblies I consult not) stand affected toward *Comprehension*.

It is a thing appears to me good, and openly so, and I speak with concern of no Party, and without Solitude, whom I please or displease by it.

Lastly, By this means may that grievous Inconvenience, which was got into the House by being in Parties, find some seasonable Remedy. For if some sincere-hearted Gentlemen, that by voting still with one Party out of pure Intention to serve the Publick, have had their Judgments biassed, to run with such as knew the bottom of things concerted, when *they* did not, shall begin once to leave that Tract, and follow the Conduct of their own Reasons, it may come in time to heal this *Evil* there is in siding, and the House recover unspeakable Benefit thereby.

I must not conclude without one Objection: you may ask, And why may not a *sober Dissenter* receive the Sacrament (yea if it were always) at *Church* as well as at a *Meeting*? To which I say first, that I am of opinion he may, and that for the present once (that is, upon occasion of an Office) it is his Duty absolutely, as the Case now stands. I say next, And why might not the receiving the Sacrament at a Meeting, and renouncing *Transubstantiation*, be a sufficient Test for any Office, but that indeed such a Test ought not to be imposed to such an End? Or else I say, why might not that serve for assuring the Government from

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Danger of Popery by such a Man, as much as if he had received it at Church ? I say again, that other Men have other Consciences, and they know their own Scruples. I say then mainly, that this is but one thing consider'd, when there are more to be considered ; and he that has regard to one thing only in any great Concern, is easily misled. I have therefore a little more to add at the end, tho it be in effect said already. To do any thing whereby Occasion is given to another to sin, and ruin his Soul, is properly *Scandal* ; and that sort of Scandal which is especially forbid. These Acts that make the *Sacrament* a Qualification for every Office, do give occasion to profane Persons to come to the Sacrament to this end only, who never else would come at all, and so they certainly sin, and by eating and drinking their Damnation do ruin their Souls. *Scandalum est dictum, vel factum* (and here is *Statutum*, which is *dictum & factum*) *minus rectum, præbens alteri* (and here is *præbens multis*) *occasionem ruinæ*. This Argument therefore thus laid from *Scandal*, for repealing (or rectifying) those Acts, is humbly conceived by me unanswerable.

I have done, and now if these Reasons prevail nothing with some, but they still harbour such a Design as mentioned, I can do no more, but pray God to give them a sense of the wrong, and turn
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their Hearts. I pray God forgive and heal all that Bitterness and Division that is among us, which is as it were an opening our Ranks, to let in the Enemy upon us. I pray God rebuke this overflowing Sea, and send us an Ebb of those Opinions, Affections, Practices, that make our Spirits so hot, and our Love so cold, one to another. I pray God especially to rebuke that Spirit, so many are of, and consider it not, which is for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon others, when they have not the least Spark of the Fear of God in their own Hearts; who scarce come to the Church, which they are in so much heat for, and whose Zeal therefore is not indeed for God, but against those they hate, when yet they have so little Cause for it. Rebuke, O Lord, the Fever of such a distempered Religion, which is beginning in some Churchmen, that makes them rave so, as if they could not be Christians unless they Crucify the *Dissenter*. But give thy Servants another Spirit, whomsoever thou pickest out at any time to the Honour of suffering for thy Name, that knowing their Duty to love their Enemies, and to pray for those that despitefully use them, they may be won, or overcome by such Charity, and thy Mercy. *Amen.*

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